

Remarks

Claims 1-30 remain in the application.

The Examiner rejects claims 1 and 8-10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Niemirowski et al. (US Patent 6,056,123, hereafter Niemirowski) in view of Beyaert et al. (US Patent 6,361,313, hereafter Beyaert). Claim 1 has been amended to require that both the upper and lower surfaces of the teeth are inclined at the specified angle. In contrast, Beyaert's teeth 13' in FIG. 4B are sloped only on their upper sides. As should be apparent from FIG. 4, cutting both surfaces of long teeth 32 at sloping angles allow a denser packing of wafers 38.

The Examiner rejects claims 4, 7, and 13 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Niemirowski and Beyaert further in view of Ohsawa (US Patent 6,033,215). Claim 1 has been further amended to require that the upper and lower surfaces extend to the axial leg portion has the required slope. In contrast, Ohsawa's inclined teeth of FIG. 7 have upper surfaces that extend only to a horizontal surface before meeting the axial leg portion. Ohsawa's geometry arises from his horizontal support surface being machined first and all the way to the axial leg portion. In contrast, the claimed structure can be achieved with an initial sloping and deep cut followed by a shallow horizontal cut or polish.

The Examiner rejects claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Niemirowski, Beyaert and Ohsawa and further in view of Ballance et al. (US Patent 6,395,363, hereafter Ballance). This claim depends upon a claim believed to be in allowable form and should therefore also be allowable.

The Examiner rejects claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Niemirowski, Beyaert, and Ohsawa and further in view of Wingo (US Patent 6,171,400). This claim depends from a claim believed to be in allowable form and should therefore also be allowable.

The Examiner rejects claims 14, 15, 17-20, 22, 24, 25, and 27-29 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Niemirowski in view of Beyaert and Ohsawa. Claim 14 has been amended similarly to claim 1 to require that the upper and lower teeth surfaces extend to the axial

portion of the leg at the required sloping angle. Claim 24 already includes this recitation although this claim has been amended to more clearly claim the sloping angle in a way clearly understood already by the Examiner. As argued before, Ohsawa's structure is different in that his upper tooth surface does slope at the required angle while extending to the axial leg portion and there is no suggestion to change the structure to that of the claims.

The Examiner rejects claims 21 and 30 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Niemirowski, Beyaert, and Ohsawa and further in view of Wingo. These claims depend upon claims believed to be in allowable form and should therefore also be allowable.

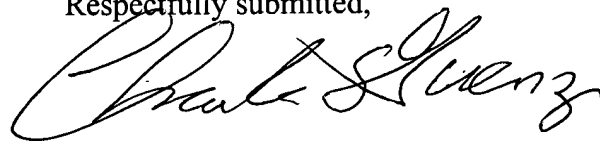
The Examiner rejects claim 23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Niemirowski, Beyaert, and Ohsawa and further in view of Ballance. This claim depends upon a claim believed to be in allowable form and should therefore also be allowable.

The Examiner objects to claims 2, 3, 11, 12, and 26 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would otherwise allow them. The patentability of these claims is not being independently asserted at this time.

In view of the above amendments, consideration and allowance of all claims are respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that a telephone interview would be helpful, he is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the listed telephone number, which is on California time.

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Respectfully submitted,



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